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## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

further to Questions for Oral Answer B6-0162/2008 and B6-0163/2008

pursuant to Rule 108(5) of the Rules of Procedure

by Seán Ó Neachtain

on behalf of the UEN Group

on the crisis in the fisheries sector due to the rising fuel prices

**European Parliament resolution on the crisis in the fisheries sector due to the rising fuel prices**

*The European Parliament,*

- A. whereas the current crisis that the Community fishing sector faces is due to the constant rise in the price of fuel, which has undergone an increase of more than 300% in the last five years and more than 40% since January 2008,
  - B. whereas prices of fishing products are similar to those of twenty years ago and whereas, for certain species, a considerable reduction – up to 25% since the beginning of the year – has occurred owing to the massive entry of imports from illegal fishing,
  - C. whereas in the fishing sector, unlike in other sectors of the economy, the price of fuel cannot affect the price of first sale of products, since in the current situation fishermen cannot fix prices,
  - D. whereas, in spite of the restructuring plans in force and the successive business readjustments, the incessant worsening of this crisis has made many companies financially unviable and other fishing enterprises have been left in high-risk situations, which is giving rise to numerous demonstrations of protest in a large number of Member States,
  - E. whereas on 28 May 2008 the three European organisations representing the fisheries sector (Europêche, AEOP and Cogeca) have held a meeting with the Fisheries Commissioner and have presented the claims of the sector,
  - F. whereas a solution to the problem can only be found if serious measures are taken in the short, medium and long term,
  - G. whereas EU fishermen's incomes have fallen this year, despite the fact that the fishermen have incurred rising costs,
- 1. Calls on the Commission to urgently adopt a regulation that allows Member States to be flexible on company expenses and workers through, amongst other state measures, reductions in social security contributions from managers and workers on fishing vessels, as well as from those operators on land that are directly involved in extractive fishing activities;
  - 2. In relation to Community rules on state aid:
    - (a) calls on the Member States to move on urgently to the payment of *de minimis* aids, up to a maximum of EUR 30 000 per company, as determined by the relevant Community regulation, to all those companies that request them or have already

requested them;

- (b) calls on the Commission to revise this regulation and increase the aid up to EUR 100 000 per vessel instead of per company so that the level of aid is brought closer to that of other economic sectors;
  - (c) draws the attention of the Member States to the new Community directives on state subsidies in the fisheries sector and in aquaculture, which allow tax relief and reductions in labour costs for Community vessels that operate outside Community waters, and asks for these measures to be applied to those vessels that request it;
3. Recalls that, together with the rise in the price of oil, one of the most recurrent claims of the fishing fleet regarding the drop in the price of its products concerns the massive imports of fishing products at low prices from illegal fishing, and therefore insists that:
- (a) controls on imports from illegal, undeclared and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing) should be intensified and improved, for which it is vital that the future directives against IUU fishing, which are currently being debated in the Council and have been approved by the EP, are put into force;
  - (b) controls on hygiene of fishing products from third countries should be intensified and improved so as to guarantee that the same measures are applied to imported products as to Community products;
  - (c) the directive on the common market organisation in fishing products and aquaculture products should be amended so that fishermen can play a more important role in the fixing of prices and in the added value of their products and all or at least part of the rise in oil prices may be reflected in the price of fish in its first sale;
  - (d) the information on the origin of fishing products should be improved and increased, but above all the compulsory use of an informative label should be guaranteed and controlled in all cases, and fraud in the labelling of products should be prosecuted;
4. Asks for the adjustment plans for the fishing fleet be put into force in all Member States and for the financial means required to voluntarily restructure the fleet to be provided; with this aim:
- (a) calls on the Commission to establish priority criteria for the segments of the fleet that have been most affected by this crisis;
  - (b) considers essential that the national operative programmes of the European Fishing Fund are reprogrammed;
5. Calls on the Commission and the Council to investigate the reasons why fishermen's incomes have fallen this year and to address these reasons accordingly;
6. Urges the Commission to formulate specific proposals to alleviate the situation in the areas most dependent on fishing;

7. Requests that during the next Council of Ministers for Fisheries, which will take place on 28 June 2008, this matter be discussed as a priority and that the necessary measures to resolve this crisis be adopted;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Members States and the representatives of European fisheries sector organisations.